

Safety Hazard Brief

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Inventory & Monitoring Program



Plague

General Information

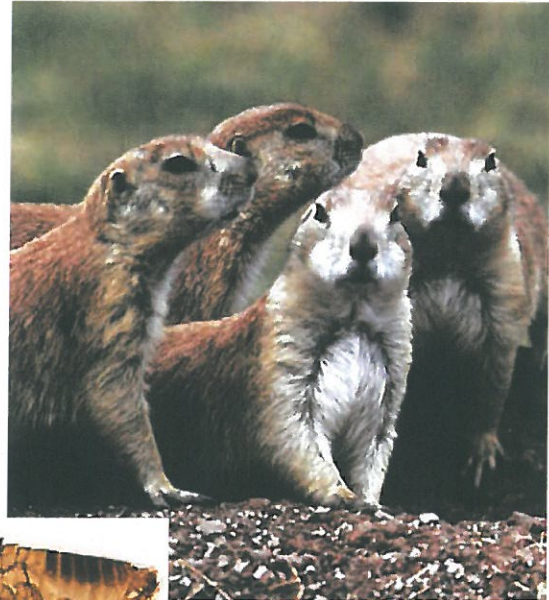
Plague is an infectious disease of animals and fleas that can also affect humans. It is caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*. Bubonic plague is the most common form of the disease and typically occurs after the bite of an infected flea. In the southern plains, plague most commonly occurs in prairie dog colonies, often wiping out a population.

Coming in Contact with Plague

The NPS and other agencies monitor the health of prairie dog colonies in and around the parks. When plague is detected, access to the affected area is denied until the disease has run its course. The Southern Plains Network does conduct vegetation monitoring in prairie dog colonies, therefore the risk of flea bite does exist. The use of insect repellent on body and clothes will help prevent the chance of contact.

Symptoms

The hallmark of bubonic plague is a swollen, painful lymph gland, called a "bubo," usually in the groin, armpit, or neck. Other symptoms include fever, chills, headache, and extreme exhaustion. A person usually becomes ill with bubonic plague two to seven days after being infected. If not treated early, the bacteria can spread from the bubo to other parts of the body.



NPS



NPS

Fleas can carry a bacterium that causes plague; plague most commonly occurs in prairie dog colonies.

For More Information

If you have a concern about potential exposure to plague in your work environment, contact your supervisor. Obtain additional information on plague from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/plague/>).



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